**Safeguarding minorities' interests**

2249. SHRI AMIR ALAM KHAN: Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the problems being encountered by the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) in safeguarding the rights of minorities as provided under the Constitution;

(b) whether Government has any plan to amend the constitution to empower the commission with powers to investigate and monitor all matters, while safeguarding the interests of minorities; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI A.R. ANTULAY): (a) The National Commission for Minorities (NCM) is discharging its functions under Section 9 of the NCM Act 1992. The NCM has reported that they face problems in handling some complaints in the absence of powers of investigation/inquiry.

(b) and (c) The matter is under consideration.

**Upliftment and development of minorities**

2250. SHRI SABIR ALI:
SHRI AMIR ALAM KHAN:

Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what have been the achievements of the Ministry in the upliftment and development of minorities, particularly muslims, during the last three years and this year till date;

(b) the plan for the future;

(c) the strategy proposed to be adopted for the purpose; and

(d) the suggestions received from cross sections of society in the matter and Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI A.R. ANTULAY): (a) to (d) The Ministry of Minority Affairs was created in January, 2006. Important achievements, since then, include announcement of the Prime Minister's New 15 Point Programme for the Welfare of Minorities, decisions taken on the recommendations of the Sachar Committee, launching of three scholarship schemes exclusively for students belonging to the minority communities, enhancing the corpus of the Maulana Azad Education Foundation from Rs. 100 crore to Rs. 250 crore, raising the authorised share capital of the National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation (NMDFC) from Rs. 650 crore to Rs. 850 crore, approval for coaching for more than 9000 students belonging to the minority communities, identification of 90 minority concentration districts (MCDs) and implementation of a multi-sectoral development programme to address the 'development deficits' in these districts. These schemes and programmes are proposed to be implemented through the Eleventh Five year Plan.